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SUBJECT: VIETNAM: HUMAN RIGHTS TAKES CENTER STAGE AT MID-TERM
CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING

REF: HANOI 1071

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SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

¶1. (SBU) The World Bank and the Government of Vietnam (GVN) hosted an informal mid-term Consultative Group (CG) meeting on June 1 in Ha Long City. Senior GVN and donor representatives engaged on a variety of economic development issues. The agenda featured an overview of the economic situation and post-WTO opportunities and challenges. Vietnam's robust growth continues, but some donors cautioned the government about the need to boost its capacity to manage a more complex economy and to give due attention to the poor. As in past consultative group meetings, a Business Forum (reftel) was held in advance of the CG. This provided an opportunity for foreign and domestic business groups to interact with the GVN.

¶2. (SBU) The Consultative Group meeting was led by James Adams, World Bank Vice President for East Asia and the Pacific. Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) Pham Gia Khiem and Minister of Planning and Investment Vo Hong Phuc led the Vietnamese side. The U.S. delegation was co-chaired by Ambassador Marine and Olivier Carduner, Director of USAID's Regional Development Mission in Bangkok. The session was well attended by bilateral donors, IFI's, UN agencies, and the EU. End summary and introduction.

¶3. (SBU) The GVN addressed the cross-cutting issue of corruption by listing the several organizational and procedural steps it has taken, namely the June 2006 Anti-Corruption Law and the establishment of a Central Steering Committee on Anti-Corruption. The donors questioned whether the GVN is paying any attention to the culture of petty bribes and if a public administration reform effort is necessary to get at the root cause of corruption. The donors also sought concrete results, such as the promised investigations of the Ministry of Transport's infamous project management unit (PMU) 18, not to mention a decrease in the number of operational PMUs government-wide.

¶4. (SBU) A session on "Emerging Development Issues" featured Water and Sanitation, HIV/AIDS and Road Safety. The GVN's reports on

these sectors were a fair assessment of the situation, and the donors' responses ranged from concern about reaching the poor (water and sanitation) to the need for the government to reverse a trend of discrimination and stigmatization of HIV/AIDS victims. The mid-term CG also discussed aid effectiveness/harmonization and the Ministry of Planning's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework. The government presented its plans to improve aid management and coordination and also outlined a pilot M&E program.

15. (SBU) Significantly, almost all donors (the IFIs and Asian donors excepted) strongly criticized the GVN for its human rights record, with some pointedly noting that as Vietnam increasingly integrates into the global economy, it should expect continued pressure on the issue. The Government acknowledged the concerns and sought to explain its actions as part-cultural and part-legal; DPM Khiem did not shut the door and expressed a willingness to continue to dialogue on human rights.

16. (SBU) Given the length and variety of subjects in this message, an abbreviated list of contents follows:

- * Overall Development Context, paragraphs 7-12
- * Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, 13-14
- * Human Rights, 15-29
- * Corruption, 30-32
- * WTO: Development Challenges, 33-37
- * Vietnam Business Forum, 38-39
- * Water and Sanitation, 40-42
- * HIV/AIDS, 43-45
- * Road Safety, 46-48
- * Aid Effectiveness and Harmonization, 49-51
- * CG Closing Remarks, 52-53
- * Embassy Comment, 54-56

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OVERALL DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT, MID-2007

GVN PRESENTATION

17. (SBU) Deputy Prime Minister Khiem's opening speech recalled the successful conclusion of the December 2006 Consultative Group and the many "momentous" events of the past year: Vietnam's WTO accession, GDP growth of 8.2 percent, the APEC summit, and publication of Vietnam's socio-economic development plan (SEDP), covering the 2006-2010 period. In a refrain that was heard throughout the day, Khiem said the post-WTO accession period represented challenges and opportunities for Vietnam. Calling for the people and Government of Vietnam to exert greater effort, Khiem cited the essential need to accelerate broad reforms in finance, banking, and state-owned enterprises.

18. (U) A Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) representative then presented a brief summary of economic developments and trends. Growth continued at a strong pace in the first half of 2007, with GDP increasing 7.9 percent. Foreign direct investment remained at high levels. While the consumer-price index was also up, inflation was not a major concern. Over the balance of the year, the GVN will seek to maintain macro-economic stability. One threat to the GVN's plans is inadequate power supply, and the MPI called for efforts to maintain if not increase output.

DONOR RESPONSE

19. (U) The IMF's assessment generally concurred with the GVN's, with the IMF saying that prospects for 2007 were "broadly favorable." The IMF representative did sound a cautionary note on inflation ("stubbornly high"); he also warned that a global slowdown might expose weaknesses in the balance sheets of financial institutions and large SOEs. The IMF also called for a more cautious fiscal stance and a more restrained monetary policy. Worried about containing the fiscal deficit, the IMF urged GVN authorities to curb expenditure growth, boost non-oil revenues and improve tax administration. The IMF said bank reform was key to protecting financial stability; the IMF also endorsed plans to make the State

Bank of Vietnam a modern central bank.

¶10. (U) There was little dissent from the other donors. Switzerland, while impressed by Vietnam's economic performance, noted that growth was uneven and that minority groups were particularly lagging. The Swiss statement also cited lack of attention to the environment as an additional problem area. Switzerland was likewise discouraged by the "slow" process in public administration reform, and reform of the banking sector. Korea zeroed in on infrastructure as a growing constraint to sustained economic growth. Vietnam must upgrade its infrastructure, particularly its road network and ports. Korea echoed Switzerland as well, warning that concentrating FDI in certain geographic areas was contributing to uneven development.

¶11. (U) The ADB took exception to the GVN's relatively passive attitude on inflation. In the ADB's view, there is substantial upward pressure on prices. The ADB also urged Vietnam to develop a human resources plan, given that increasing FDI was in turn making skilled labor a relatively scarce commodity.

¶12. (U) The World Bank (WB) representative endorsed all the above remarks. He noted two risks that might confront Vietnam on its path to middle-income country status: financial stability and attraction of FDI. The Bank urged Vietnam to strengthen its legal framework (note: the USAID STAR project is heavily engaged in this). The Bank also said GVN authorities should favorably consider a role for strategic investors as banks go through the equitization process.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

GVN PRESENTATION

¶13. (U) MPI presented a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF)

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for the 2006-2010 Socio-Economic Development Plan. The MEF as presented was long on theory and methodology, but short on specifics. MPI clearly sees the monumental tasks involved in determining measurable indicators, data collection and analysis and then turning all this into revising strategy. For the 2006-2010 period, the MEF will be a pilot effort.

DONOR RESPONSE

¶14. (U) ADB ("a bold step"), UNDP and the WB were all broadly supportive of the MEF - indeed, they have been providing technical assistance to this effort. Nevertheless, they and other donors signaled potential problems of institutional capacity and the need to carefully think through data collection issues and to choose the right indicators so that planners get a good sense of progress or the lack thereof. Several donors and the international NGO representative called for a labor force survey to be folded into the MEF as a partial way of measuring stakeholder-level progress.

HUMAN RIGHTS: ON THE DONORS' AGENDA, NOT THE GOVERNMENT'S

¶15. (SBU) Nearly all donors used their interventions in the preceding two open sessions to strongly criticize the GVN's recent adverse actions on human rights (paragraphs 16-20). Human rights also dominated a luncheon hosted by the DPM for the heads of delegation (paragraphs 21-29).

¶16. (SBU) Speaking for the EU, Germany led off by expressing concern over recent arrests and the harsh punishment meted out to some individuals. Germany cautioned that substantive progress and development went hand in hand with a free flow of information and ideas. Acknowledging that it was not always easy to strike a balance between security and freedom of expression, Germany cited its own experience for this month's G-8 summit: "Germany is building a fence to protect people; we are not building a fence to keep ideas out."

¶17. (SBU) Canada weighed in on behalf of New Zealand, Switzerland,

Norway and itself (the so-called "G-4") by suggesting that Vietnam better align its domestic laws with international human rights obligations. Canada's closing advice was that Vietnam's human rights performance has "a very heavy bearing on Vietnam's international reputation."

¶18. (SBU) For the United States, Ambassador Marine reflected that his six CG meetings on Vietnam had been marked by real dialogue and that the world has consistently applauded Vietnam's record of economic growth. However, he considers it vital that Vietnam expand the room available for political discourse. The Ambassador acknowledged that Vietnam frequently defended its human rights record by saying that a step-by-step approach was the preferred approach, but warned that freezing the process would not be to Vietnam's advantage.

¶19. (SBU) Finland, Denmark, and Luxembourg also made brief interventions on the human rights issue.

¶20. (SBU) DPM Khiem forthrightly addressed the donors' human rights concerns as expressed in the open session. He said each country has its own path and "Vietnam has chosen the right path as shown by our success in economic growth, poverty reduction, and supporting ethnic minorities." Adding that human rights issues are often discussed, he said human rights and democracy are being realized in accord with Vietnam's laws and regulations. He blamed the recent arrests of a "handful of people" on violations of Vietnam's laws. Concluding his remarks to the plenary, he pledged to continue to work in an "open and constructive manner" to continue the dialogue on human rights.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE CONTINUES OVER LUNCH

¶21. (SBU) At a luncheon for the heads of delegation, DPM Khiem responded to World Bank VP Adams' invitation to comment on the human rights issue by noting that donors have a history of raising "hot issues" at the mid-term CG meetings, referring to the topics of red tape and corruption in recent years.

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¶22. (SBU) Turning to human rights, Khiem expanded on his open session remarks. "From the bottom of my heart, I recognize what you said was designed to help Vietnam. I took many notes and will consider carefully what you all said. What we find appropriate, we will take action on. We all have different ways of thinking. Every citizen should follow the laws and constitution of his/her country; this is true in Vietnam, just as it is in America. The question of whether specific laws are appropriate for Vietnam can be reviewed. However, if the majority does not see need for change, there will be no change. You asked why we arrest people for expressing their opinions. I think the key is that they did so in ways that are not constructive. This violates Vietnamese law. Of course, they can hire lawyers to defend themselves in court. The use of open, public courts of law is a change from past practice. The vast majority of Vietnam's citizens support the verdicts handed down in these cases."

¶23. (SBU) He then referred to the case of Le Thi Cong Nhan (the female lawyer convicted on May 11 for violating Article 79 and sentenced to four years in prison): "All the people in my ward voiced complaints about her activities and asked for action. Should we support one percent of the population or 99 percent? There are proper channels to raise one's view, through the press, the National Assembly (NA), or even in a letter to the President. But, she did not choose to use these. She and others refused to recognize Article 4 of the Constitution, which specifies the role of the Party."

¶24. (SBU) Khiem concluded by stating that development of human rights will be a long process that must respect Vietnam's history and cultural norms. He said the Vietnamese are not conservative - there have been improvements and there will be more, as the target is a rich, stable country. He then repeated that the Vietnamese leadership is willing to have a real dialogue on human rights.

¶25. (SBU) Adams then opened the issue up to comments from the floor

and one after another, the donors repeated or expanded on their open session comments. Those who spoke included: Sweden ("our Parliament is asking tough questions about the direction Vietnam is headed"; continued support for development assistance is at risk); Denmark (Vietnam is hurting its image around the world; change will take time, but you need to move in the right direction now); UK (hope that Vietnam can take positive steps in the next few weeks); Germany, Finland, Australia and Norway.

¶26. (SBU) Ambassador Marine summed up the discussion, saying that as the DPM has heard, we donors have growing concerns about human rights and see the situation as being quite serious. But, our message is also that we are here to help Vietnam with this and all of its other developmental issues. While we recognize that change will take time, we leave this meeting hoping that the GVN will consider carefully our concerns and take concrete steps to address them. The Ambassador added that he often uses the word pragmatic to describe the Vietnamese people. In that vein, he hopes that the Party and the Government will examine their position carefully and weigh the consequences of their actions. In a spirit of pragmatism, the Party should find ways to allow more space for political change.

¶27. (SBU) The EC Ambassador asked what role the National Assembly (NA) could play. The DPM answered that the NA is Vietnam's "highest authority" and that in the future, the NA will pay more attention to "supervision."

¶28. (SBU) Adams asked what more can or should the donors do. The DPM called for more help in capacity building. He then repeated his "bottom of his heart" line and reminded the group that "emerging issues" are addressed and improved upon after each CG meeting. "We will do this again."

¶29. (SBU) Adams offered a good review/wrap-up and closed by saying that it would be enormously helpful to see progress on the human rights issue in the short run. Khiem summarized by saying, "The feelings you have provided reflect wholehearted and sincere comments; we are also focused on the corruption issue, and there is

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strong determination in 2007 to combat corruption, which is one of the GVN's top three tasks. Anyone discovered to be corrupt will be punished severely." He thanked the group for a frank and sincere dialogue over lunch and repeated that regarding whatever was said that is correct, the government will do what it can when it agrees. When there is not agreement, dialogue should be the course of action.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUE - CORRUPTION

GVN PRESENTATION

¶30. (U) The report from the GVN's Government Inspectorate highlighted the many procedural and strategic steps that have flowed from the June 2006 Law on Anti-Corruption. These steps include a number of implementing decrees (e.g., asset declaration, gifts), an action plan, establishment of a Central Steering Committee on Anti-Corruption and (soon) monthly press briefings on the Committee's work. The Inspectorate also cited the GVN's "timely and forthright" measures in dealing with notorious cases such as PMU 18, Petrolimex, and quota trading in the Ministry of Finance. Finally, the GVN is elaborating a long-term (through 2020) anti-corruption strategy.

DONOR RESPONSE

¶31. (U) Sweden, which has carved out a leading role in working with the GVN on anti-corruption issues, offered a comprehensive response. Sweden urged improved coordination between GVN agencies involved in the anti-corruption effort. Welcoming the long-term anti-corruption strategy, Sweden requested that the draft strategy promised for September be shared with donors for discussion and comment. Sweden would look for the strategy to emphasize prevention and would also want to see attention given to monitoring and measurement

mechanisms. Finally, Sweden recalled that the GVN had promised to publish the results of its own investigation into PMU 18. Donors are keen to see this so that a full picture of PMU 18 can emerge.

¶32. (U) Almost all donors offered comments on the GVN's anti-corruption drive, with many describing the need for public administration reform (and salary reform) as closely linked to anti-corruption efforts. Denmark reflected the views of many by citing a pervasive lack of ethics among officials, leading to a culture of petty bribes, a phenomenon that is especially felt by the poor. Denmark also called for judicial reform and a more open media as critical to anti-corruption efforts. Canada's lengthy remarks included another call for the GVN reports on PMU 18 and another admonition against petty corruption. Ambassador Marine's remarks endorsed the other speakers, while specifically calling for an overhaul of PMU operations in general.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUE - WTO: DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

GVN PRESENTATION

¶33. (U) The Ministry of Trade and Office of Government (OOG) both made presentations. OOG briefly summarized the genesis of the GVN's post-WTO Action Plan and the call for ministries, agencies, and provinces/cities to submit detailed plans to the Prime Minister by the end of September 2007. OOG singled out UK, Australia and the World Bank for its "Beyond WTO Program," which is aimed at maintaining sustainable development and poverty reduction objectives through implementation of Vietnam's WTO commitments.

¶34. (U) Ministry of Trade Vice Minister Le Danh Vinh then outlined challenges posed by Vietnam's WTO entry. The main challenges are increased competition in the global market, dealing with the impact of unequal development among Vietnam's regions, managing an economy that is suddenly more susceptible to global events, serious staff shortages, and preservation/maintenance of Vietnam's culture, environment and defense capabilities. In terms of prescriptions, the Vice Minister was not terribly specific, e.g., "protect and develop national cultural values." He was on slightly more familiar ground in detailing his call for harmonization of Vietnam's legal

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system and economic institutions with WTO rules.

DONOR RESPONSE

¶35. (U) The donors sounded a variety of themes in response. Australia said, "The hard work does not stop with WTO accession" and went on to share lessons learned from other countries.

¶36. (U) The EC unleashed a blunt commentary on intellectual property rights, calling Vietnam's track record "appalling" and, reaching back to the earlier human rights discussion, asking, "How can Vietnam vigorously enforce public security laws but not IPR infringement? Vietnam has no track record of being serious in enforcing IPR." Later, the U.S. intervention also cited IPR enforcement as a problem, saying that the GVN must "do more and quickly."

¶37. (U) Donors also cautioned Vietnam to pay due attention to education, as the rural poor risk being left behind unless the primary education system is fixed. Norway called for strengthened industrial relations (they are a donor in this area). Japan, noting that there will inevitably be winners and losers as a result of WTO accession, promoted the notion of a social safety net, as did ADB. Along the same lines, the NGO community advocated establishment of an early warning system for vulnerable populations.

VIETNAM BUSINESS FORUM

¶38. (U) The donors also received a briefing on the results of the May 30 Vietnam Business Forum (VBF), held in Hanoi (reftel). Minister of Education and Training Nguyen Thien Nhan responded on behalf of the government with the most forthright and dynamic

presentation of the meeting which focused on the challenges for human resource development as Vietnam integrates into the world economy. Inter alia, he urged a program for "training on demand," a kind of rapid-response program to meet the needs of employers quickly; low-interest loans for employers to construct training facilities (he cited the U.S. firm INTEL); linkages between research institutes and universities; establishing advanced "centers of excellence" at Vietnamese universities; a talent promotion program; and more generally, significant increases in overseas university training for Vietnamese and more English-language programs.

¶39. (U) The Minister's presentation was well received, and Post believes there are certainly elements of his vision to which the United States can lend support.

EMERGING DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

¶40. (U) The mid-term CG then turned to three development challenge themes: water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS, and road safety. Both the presentations and donor responses were somewhat brief given time constraints.

WATER AND SANITATION

¶41. (U) The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development was straightforward and focused on rural water and wastewater. By the end of 2006, 66 percent of the population had access to clean water, and 52 percent had hygienic latrines. But of those with access to clean water, only 30 percent access water sources that are considered hygienic. Further, water quality is generally declining, whether due to poor maintenance of existing systems, or intrusion of waste, saline, or agriculture chemicals. Quantity of available water is also an issue in some areas.

¶42. (U) Denmark took the lead in responding by noting that Vietnam was falling behind in meeting the targets it had set. The problems were compounded given that the geographic areas not yet covered were hard to reach, and costs for water and sanitation systems were sometimes three times investment cost in other areas. Denmark concluded by saying that the GVN needed a "pro-poor" water and sanitation strategy. Germany also cited cost concerns, asking for a realistic plan and suggesting that the private sector had role to

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play.

HIV/AIDS

¶43. (U) The Ministry of Health's presentation on HIV/AIDS prevention and control was a good overview of the situation. The report was also notable in that it was the only GVN report to explicitly list the recommendations from the previous CG and report actions taken and progress. The Ministry then tabled the following issues:

- * The GVN needs continued financial and technical support from donors;
- * Donor help is especially needed for information, education and communication (IE&C) campaigns for behavioral change; care and treatment; institutional strengthening in management, surveillance, and monitoring and evaluation; and capacity building for provincial-level HIV/AIDS prevention and control programs.
- * The GVN also seeks harmonization of donor procedures for HIV/AIDS programs.

¶44. (U) Ambassador Marine spoke on behalf of the Heads of Agency Informal HIV Coordination Group. He welcomed recent progress on the Coordination Action Plan but said the pace needs to be accelerated. He repeated the request of all HIV/AIDS donors for regular high-level meetings. Noting that "stigma and discrimination" against HIV/AIDS were prevalent in Vietnam, Ambassador Marine called for high-level GVN officials to publicly support people at risk or living with HIV/AIDS and help them be fully integrated into society. In response to the MOH's plea for continued financial support, the Ambassador reported President Bush's \$30 billion PEPFAR initiative

for 2008-2012. If approved by Congress, this assistance will assure U.S. continued support here in Vietnam.

¶45. (U) All the subsequent donor interventions endorsed Ambassador Marine's statement; several singled out the "stigma and discrimination" concern, and called for the GVN to exercise leadership.

ROAD SAFETY

¶46. (U) The Ministry of Transport's report on traffic safety revealed that annual traffic deaths were in the 12-13,000 per year range. The Ministry described traffic accidents as an "urgent social problem." The Ministry's remedies include driver education and enforcement of traffic rules, removal of unsafe vehicles from roadways, and addressing elements of the transport infrastructure that are not safe.

¶47. (U) This topic also evoked some colorful language, with Denmark referring to Hanoi's traffic as the "law of the jungle." For the World Bank, the traffic situation is a "leading public health issue" and people drive badly because they know there is no enforcement. By the Transport Ministry's count, motorbikes are involved in 70 percent of all accidents: many donors suggested that helmet use should be mandatory.

¶48. (U) Japan referred to its own past and their experience of a "traffic war." Their own program of the "Four E's" - enforcement, education, emergency medicine, and engineering - reduced fatalities by 60 percent.

AID EFFECTIVENESS AND HARMONIZATION

¶49. (U) The final session of the day was "Aid Effectiveness and Harmonization: The Legal Framework for ODA." MPI presented a report on an ODA institutional framework; their report was basically a recitation of decrees, circulars and other documents that MPI is working on to improve ODA management and utilization. The donors noted the many documents and their projected rollout dates. Citing past problems of inconsistencies between these documents, several donors suggested this problem could be avoided by a careful review and issuing them all at the same time, even if this meant a delay in some.

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¶50. (U) Separately, the World Bank reported on the status of aid harmonization and effectiveness efforts. The World Bank statement was a progress report on the five pillars of the 2005 Hanoi Core Statement. The Harmonization pillar evoked the most discussion. The EC cited a voluntary "Code of Conduct on Division of Labor in Development Policy," issued by EU Ministers on May 15. The EU members present in Hanoi are still digesting this, but the present intent of the local EC office is to invite all donors to participate in the Code of Conduct. The UN Resident Coordinator reported on the status of the "One UN" initiative.

¶51. (U) ADB summarized the results of the bi-annual Joint Performance Portfolio Review carried out in May 2007 by the GVN and five development banks (ADB, AFD, KfW, JBIC, World Bank). The Joint Review praised the overall excellent development results of the combined \$19 billion in total commitments, but faulted "notoriously slow implementation" and noted that disbursement performance lagged far behind other countries in the region. This poor performance was cast in human terms, as the Joint Review suggested a one-percent increase in the disbursement rate would generate an additional \$500 million of investment over the plan period, thereby allowing about one million additional people to be lifted out of poverty. The ADB, Japan and the World Bank used their remarks to call for urgent implementation of the twelve "ODA Fast Track" recommendations.

CG SESSION'S CLOSING REMARKS

¶52. (U) The wrapups by MPI Minister Phuc, WB Vice President Adams

and DPM Khiem were brief but balanced assessments of the day's discussions. Phuc reasserted the GVN's three goals of high growth, administrative reform (this includes WTO implementation) and battling corruption and noted the issues raised would be valuable in furthering the GVN's efforts. Adams commended Vietnam for its rapid economic and social progress but also summarized the future challenges as financial sector stability, attracting private sector investment for infrastructure and mitigating the potential adverse social effects of global integration.

¶53. (U) Both Khiem and Adams referred to the human rights discussions earlier in the day, with Adams acknowledging a definite "lack of space" for expression of alternate views. Khiem thanked the donors for the "frank, candid and sincere" remarks and pledged that the government would take them seriously. He closed by iterating the government's willingness and preference to address human rights through dialogue.

EMBASSY COMMENT

¶54. (SBU) The one-day mid-term CG was a useful exchange on the SEDP, WTO implementation initiatives, corruption and some key development issues. The human rights issues tabled by individual donors were probably expected by the government but the strong concern raised by so many countries no doubt took the government by surprise. While neither the press nor the World Bank's press release on the CG meeting referenced the exchanges on human rights, the GVN certainly received a loud and clear message that what the GVN does in this area is being watched by the rest of the world and in some instances could influence assistance levels.

¶55. (SBU) As with all such meetings, the real test is how well the GVN heeds the donors' admonitions and advice over the coming cycle and how quickly it implements further reforms. The track record is mixed. A reading of the Embassy's report of the December CG indicates varying progress in some areas (banking reform, public administration reform, corruption, aid harmonization, e.g., project management units still abound). Last December's CG made the same points about the unfortunate stigma attached to HIV/AIDS victims. Progress has been made in some areas and clearly, the World Bank's caution last December about avoiding an anti-climatic effect of post-WTO accession has been heeded.

¶56. (SBU) The clear theme of almost every presentation in the one-day mid-term CG was that Vietnam's accomplishments are genuine but to maintain that momentum even further efforts are needed: in

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more sophisticated economic management, more capital market development, better infrastructure, especially in ports, and probably most important of all in raising the human resource skills to reap the advantages of joining the global economy. Through the USAID portfolio and other efforts, we are supporting those efforts.

MARINE